



# Evaluation of Growth Management in Maine

Presentation to the  
Joint Standing Committee  
on Natural Resources  
Maine State Planning Office  
March 2006

# Today's Presentation

- What we did
- Key findings
- Recommendations


# Resolve 2004 Chapter 73

Directed State Planning Office to:

- Study the Growth Management Act, rules, and procedures
- Review the effectiveness of land use planning in Maine
- Assess the cost of implementing our recommendations

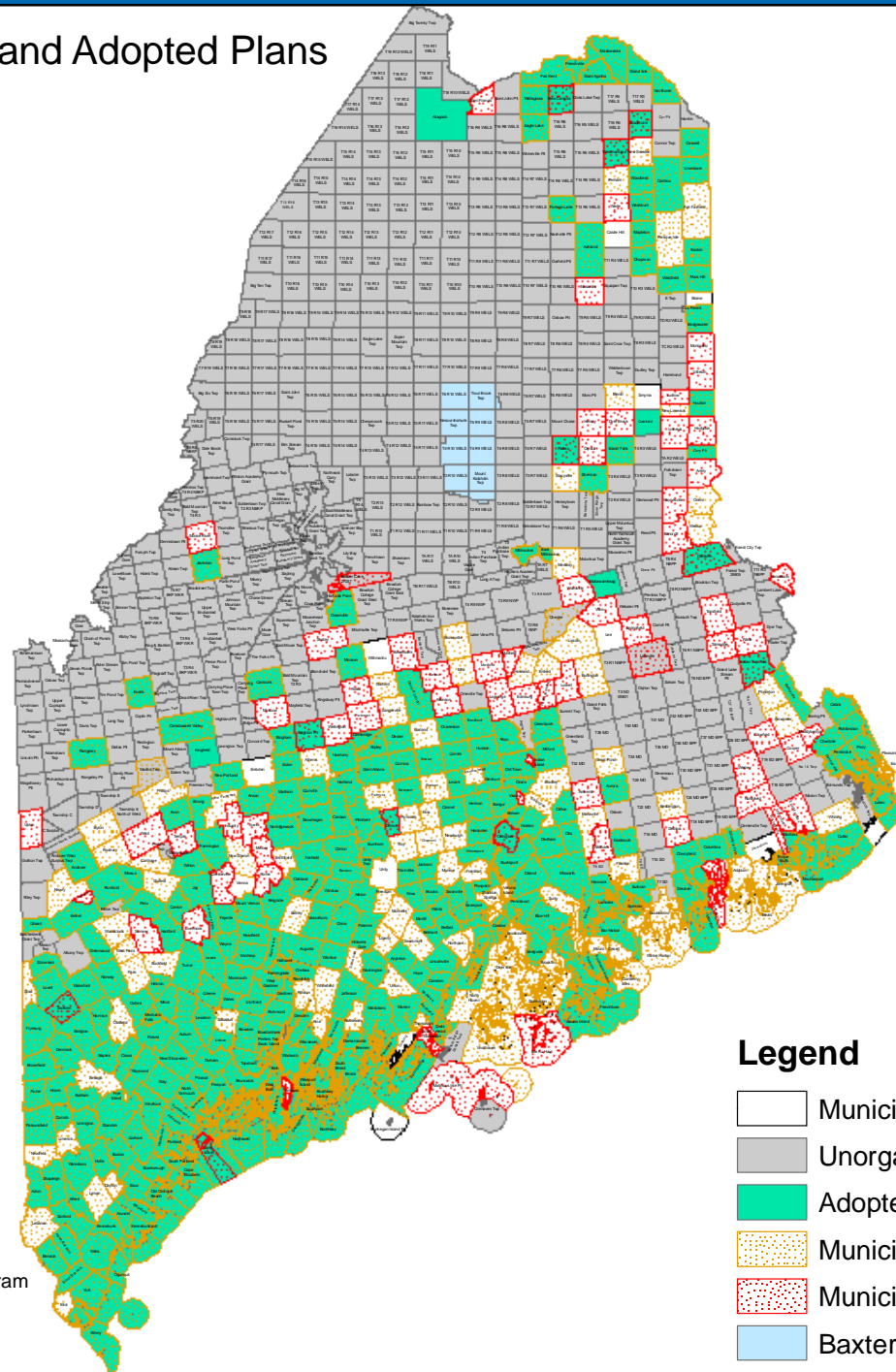
# Results of Growth Management

Since 1988:

- 379 towns received state planning grants
  - 250 towns with locally adopted comprehensive plans
- 



# Maine Towns with Grants and Adopted Plans



## Legend

- Municipality with No Plan
- Unorganized Territory in LURC jurisdiction
- Adopted Comprehensive Plan
- Municipalities Receiving a Grant
- Municipalities Receiving No Grants
- Baxter State Park

### Notes:

Map produced by the Maine State Planning Office  
 February 2006, GIS Coordinator: Janet Parker  
 Source data from MEGIS, Accuracy  $\pm 40$  feet:  
 Town boundaries, County boundaries  
 Status of Comprehensive Plan from Land Use Program  
 using the best available data.  
 Projection: Universal Transverse Mercator,  
 North American Datum 1983, Zone 19, Meters

# It's been 17 years...



It's time to look towards the next generation of  
land use planning in Maine

# Study of the Growth Management Act



Effectiveness of Land Use  
Planning in Maine

# Research Methods

- 2-day Summit with 100 people
- Focus groups with 5 stakeholder sectors
- 20 in-depth interviews
- Met with and received comments from interested parties
- Advisory assistance from CPAC





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## Research Report

Maine State Planning Office

Comprehensive Planning and Growth  
Management Interviews

December 2005

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## Research Report

Maine State Planning Office

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Management Focus Groups

Date: December 2005

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Contents Compiled by:  
The State Planning Office

<http://www.state.me.us/spo/landuse/>

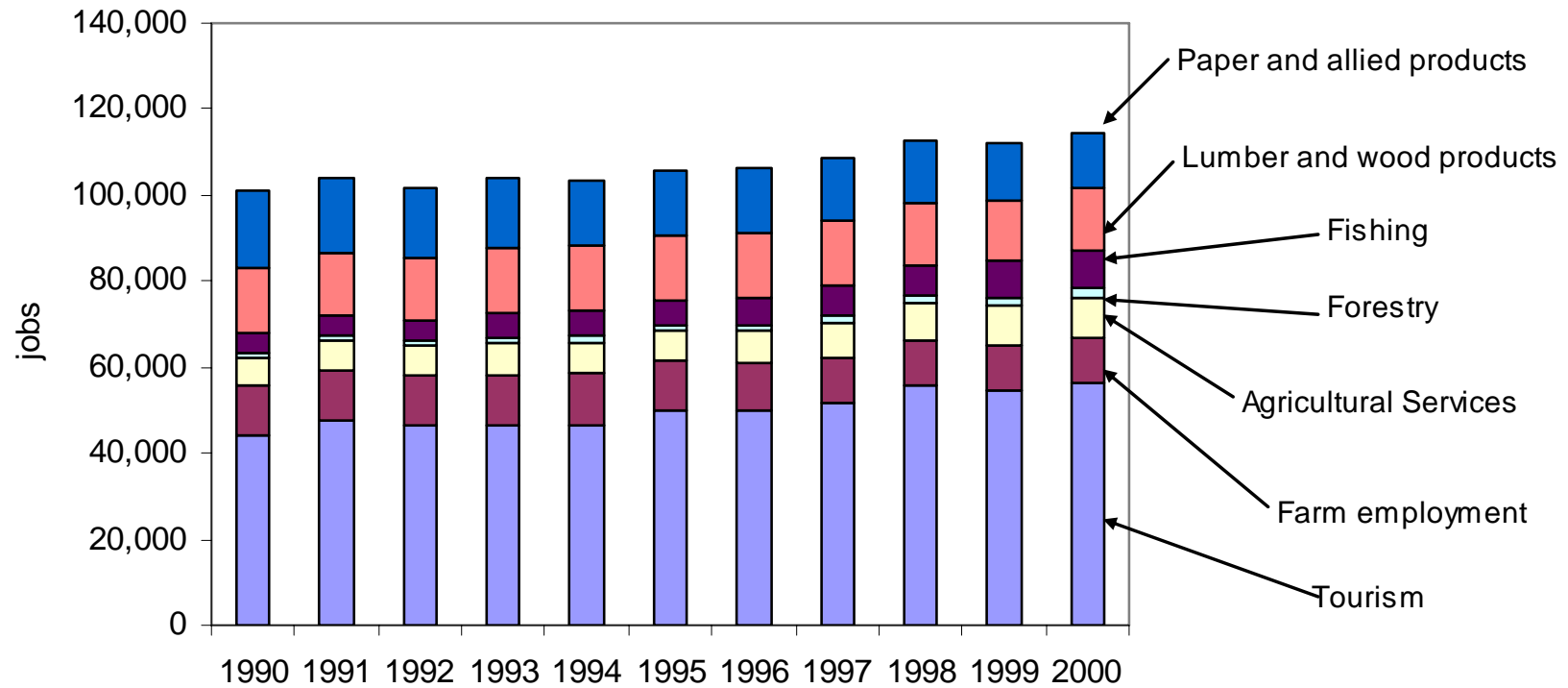
# Some of Our Key Findings...



# Effective Land Use Planning Is Essential to Maine's Economic Prosperity

- Efficient transportation systems to move people and goods
- Adequate and affordable housing for workers
- Healthy communities to keep workers healthy

### Full and Part-Time Employment in Natural Resource-based Industries, 1990-2000



Maine's natural resource-based industry provides over 100,000 jobs

# State Oversight Is Important to Protect State Investments

Each year, the State invests nearly

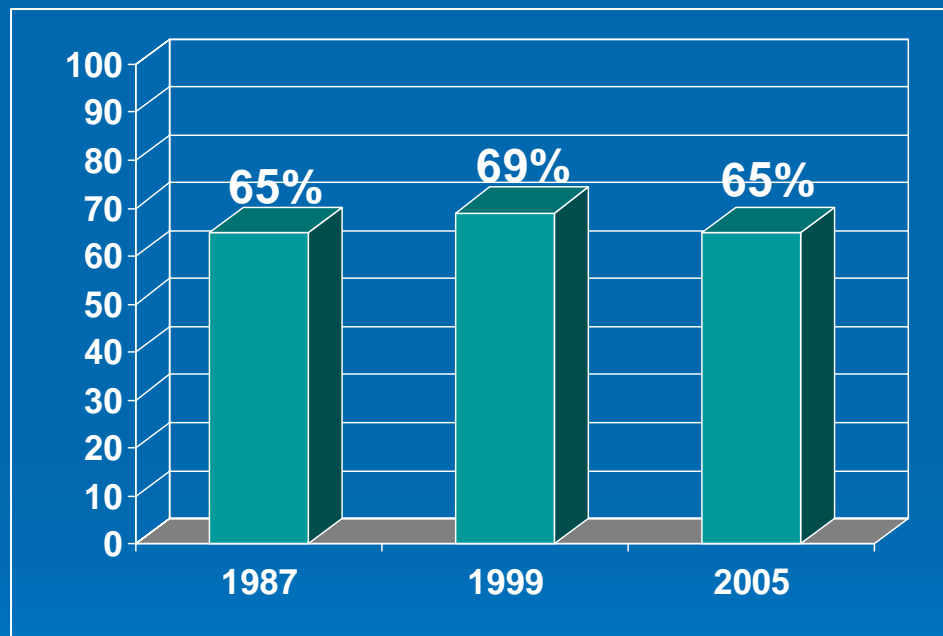
**\$400,000,000**

in schools, roads, wastewater treatment, community development, land conservation, and other local infrastructure





# Maine People Value Less Developed, Rural Landscapes



Percent of Maine voters in favor of land conservation bonds

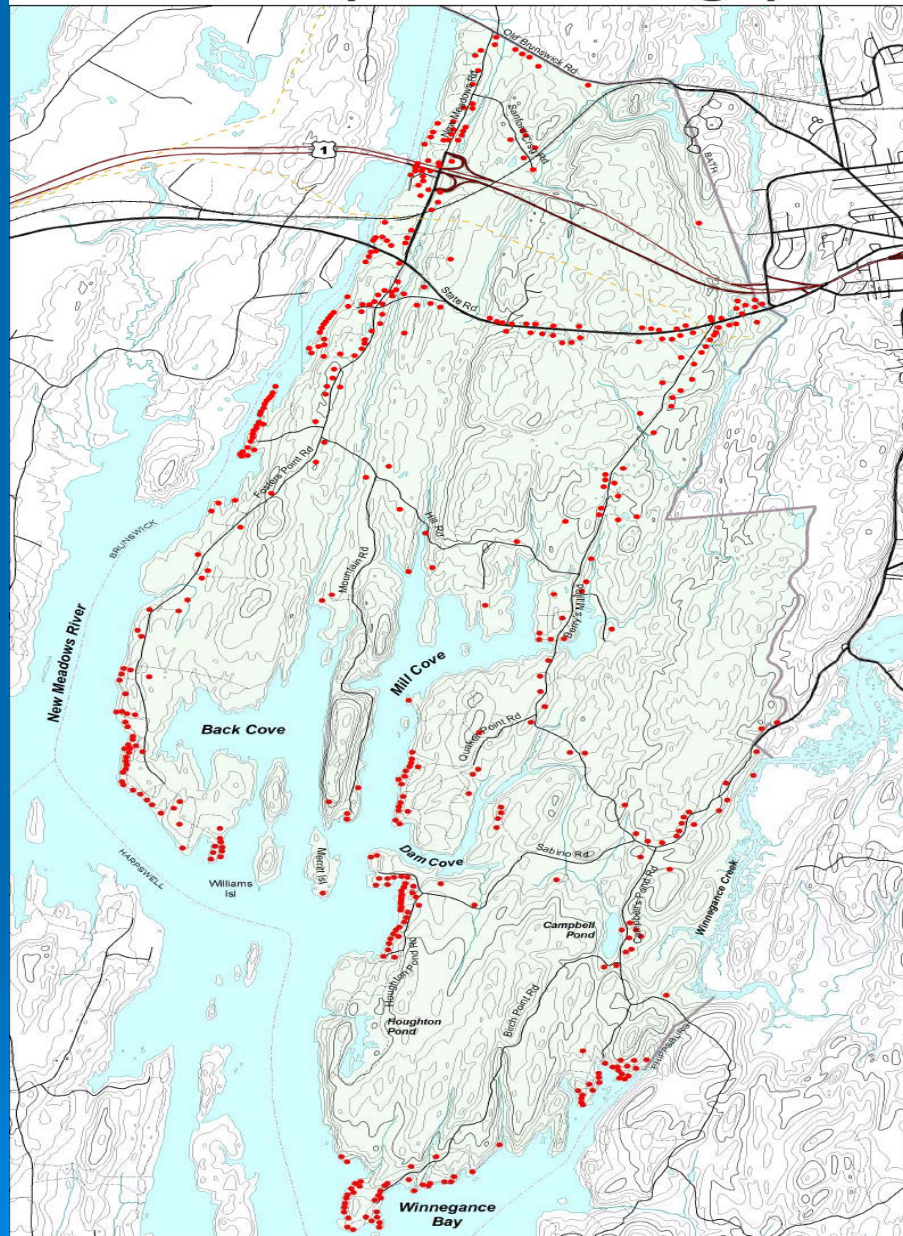
- Maine voters consistently favor land conservation by two-thirds
- 81% of Mainers agree that the natural beauty of Maine should be preserved

# Comprehensive Planning Has Not Directed Growth Into Growth Areas...

For example, in West Bath...

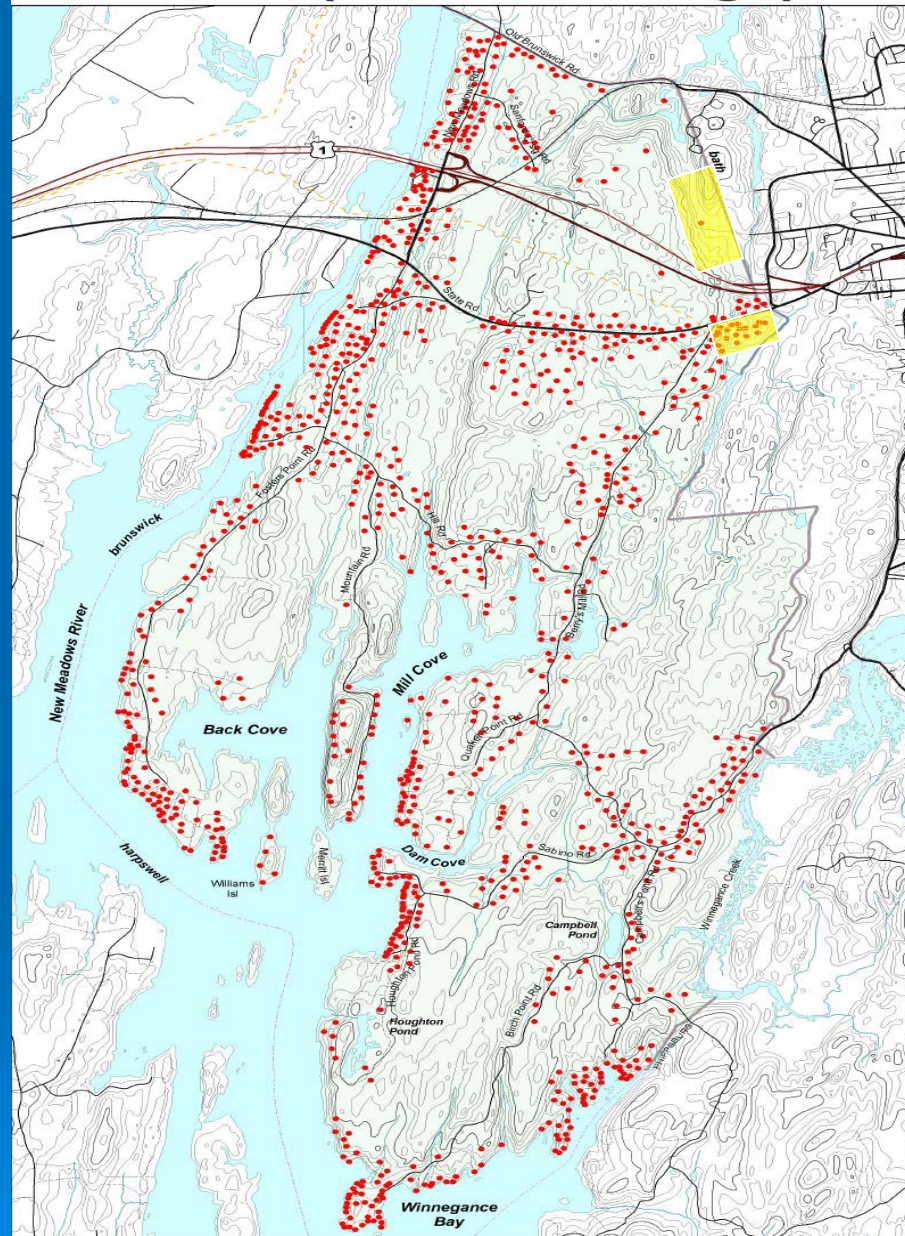


## 1957 (447 Buildings)



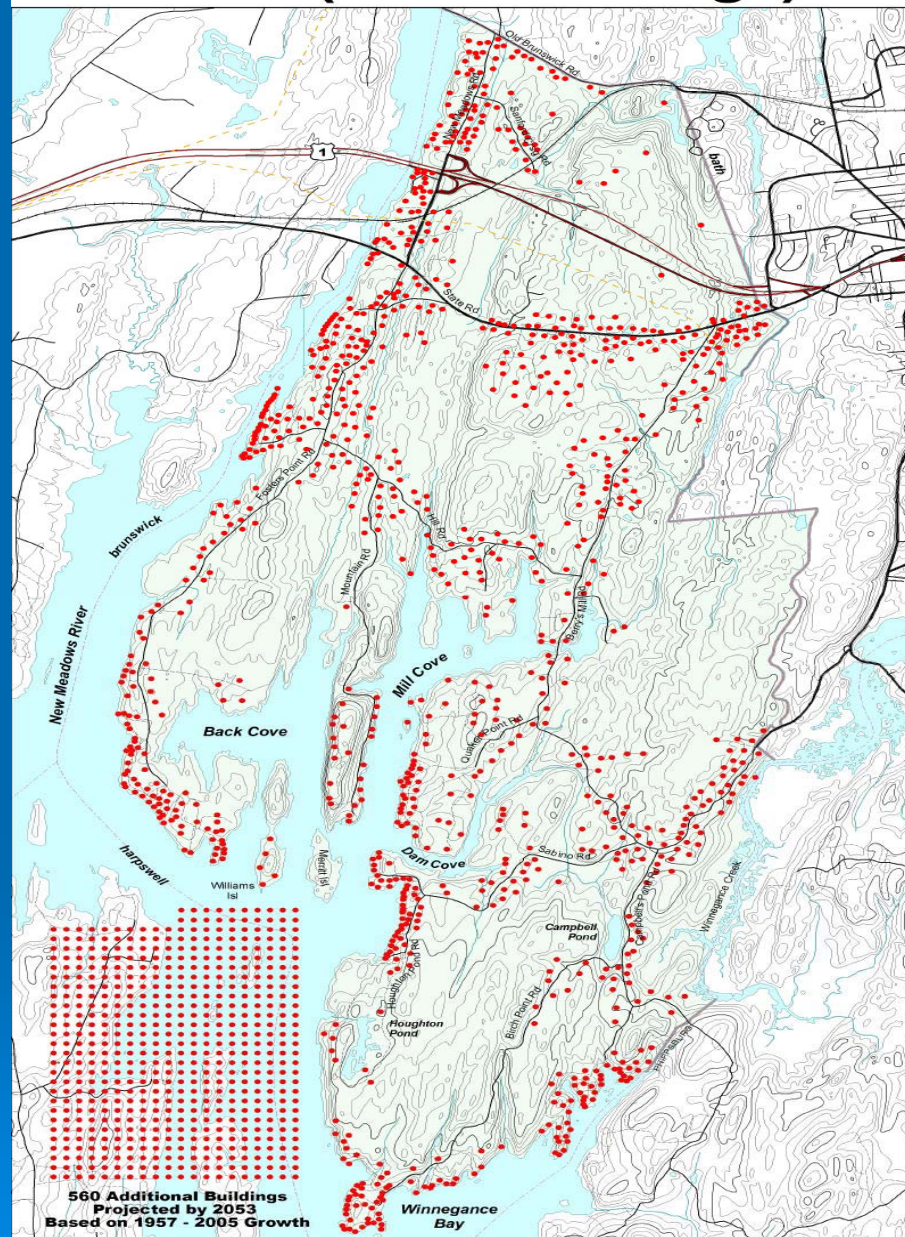


## 2005 (1007 Buildings)



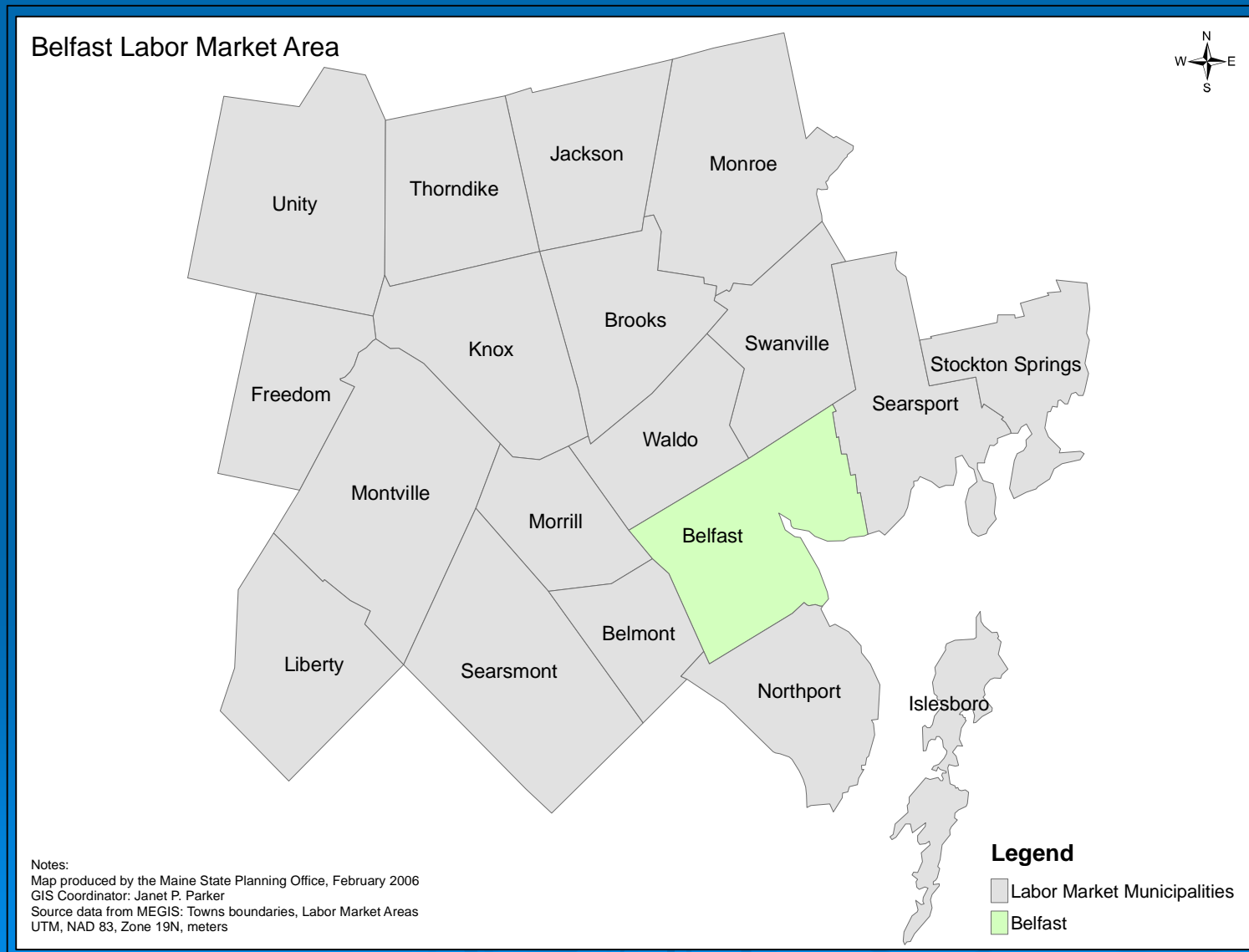


## 2005 (1007 Buildings)





# Greater Regional Input into Land Use Planning Has Strong, Statewide Support



# Other Key Findings

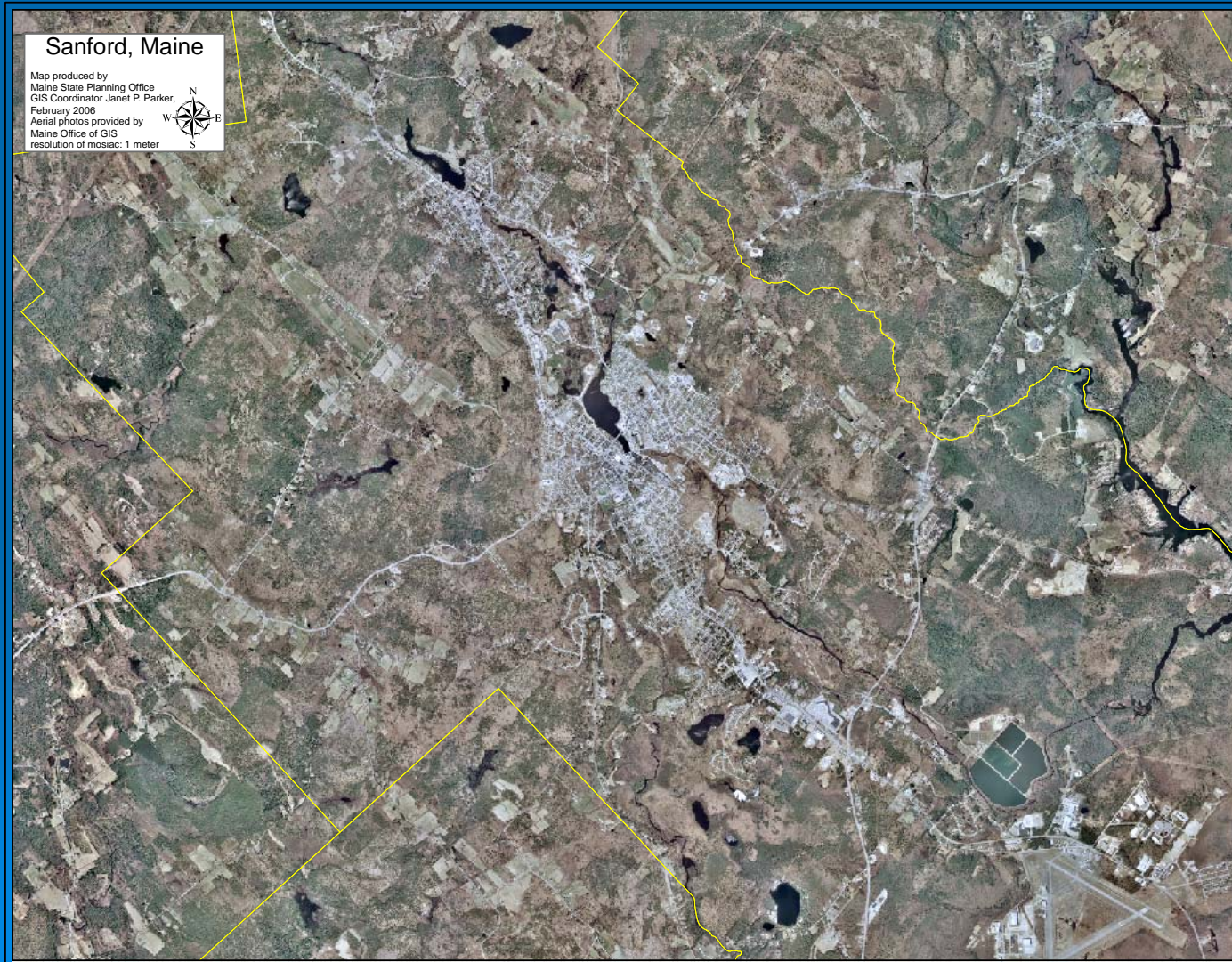
- Communities clearly support land use planning
- There is dissatisfaction with the process for reviewing comprehensive plans
- Current comprehensive plan requirements are seen as too prescriptive; yet too vague
- Improved tools and assistance are strongly desired
- Implementation of plans often does not achieve goals

# Other Key Findings

- Local boards are overwhelmed and frustrated
- Affordable housing is a problem but there is no consensus on solutions
- Property taxes and market forces are primary drivers in land use development
- State must set priorities in areas of state/regional significance
- There is a desire for regional input on large capital projects with regional impacts



# A New Approach to Planning in Maine



# A Vision for Planning

- State, regions, and municipalities in Maine work together
- We sustain our natural environment, quality of place, and healthy economy
- Planning results in the development that Maine people want
- There is a coordinated approach that links state, regional, and local priorities



# Major Recommendations

## 1. Enhance Local Planning

*(addresses the directive to make recommendations on the planning process)*

## 2. Shift State Focus to Issues of Regional and State Significance

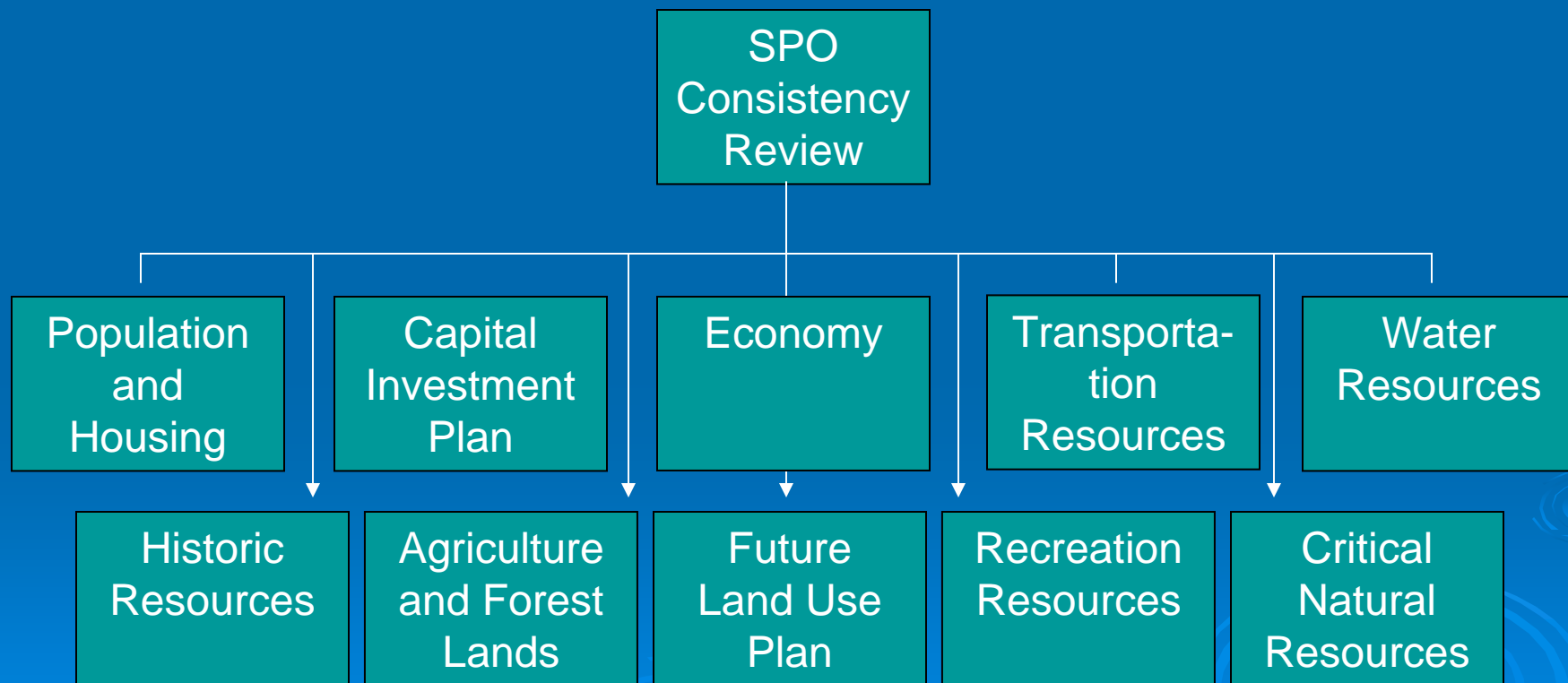
*(addresses the directive to make recommendations that would lead to more effective land use)*

# Enhance Local Planning


- Focus SPO review of local plans
- Improve tools for local planning
- Monitor and track changes to measure effectiveness

# Enhance Local Planning Focus SPO Reviews

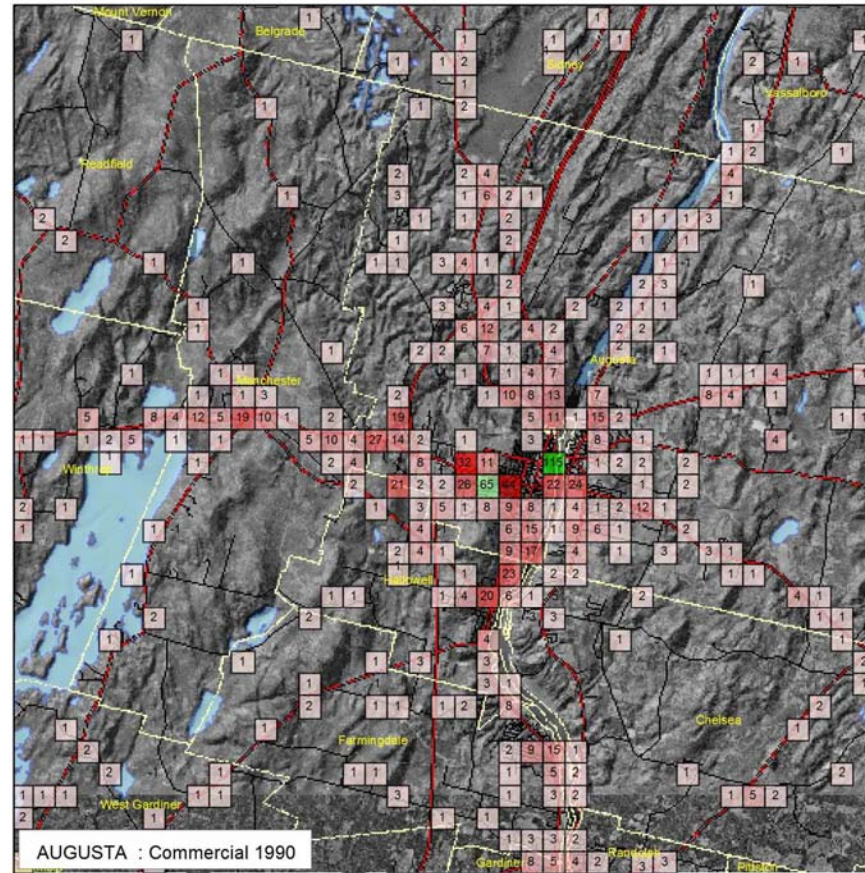
In-depth review of *Future Land Use* element



# Enhance Local Planning Improve Tools

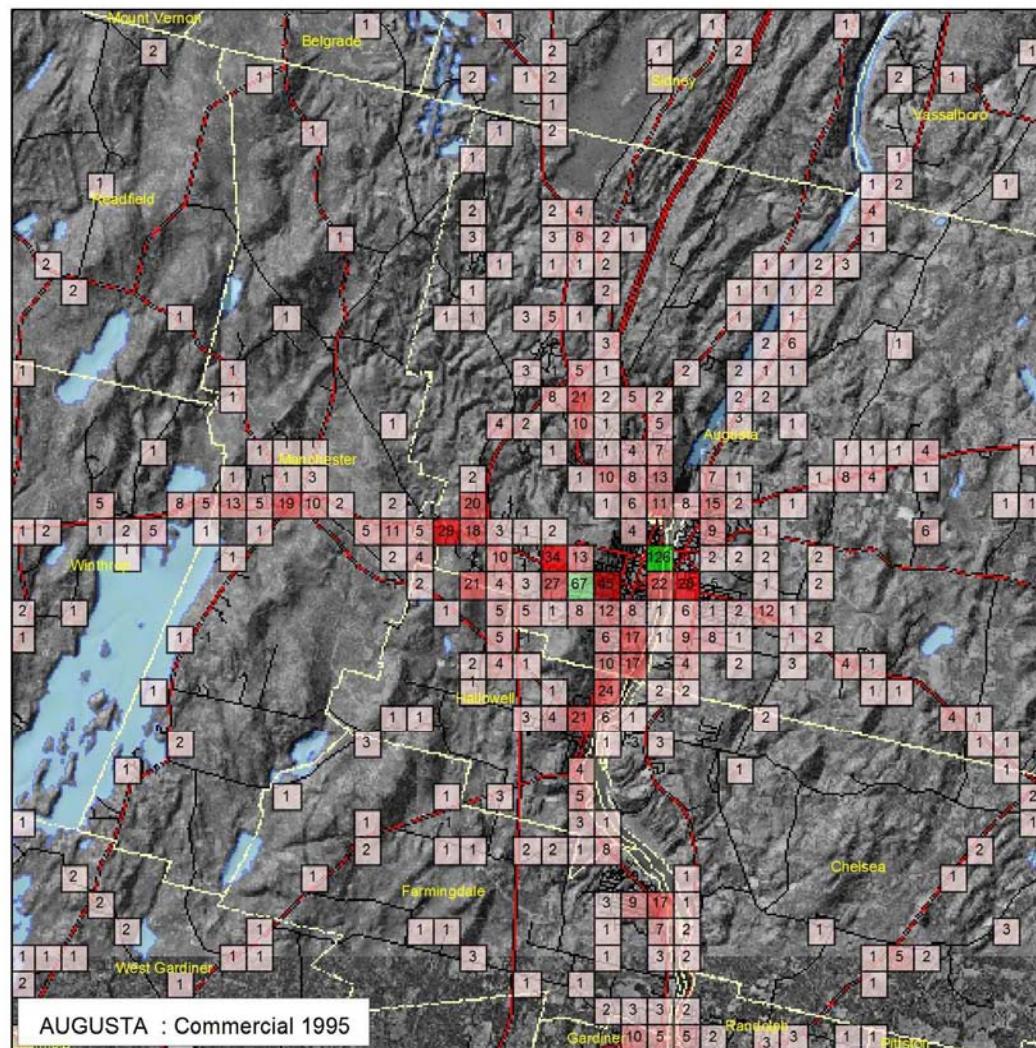
- Web tools
  - Sample ordinances
  - Process guidance
  - Workshops and trainings
- 

# Enhance Local Planning Monitor and Track Changes

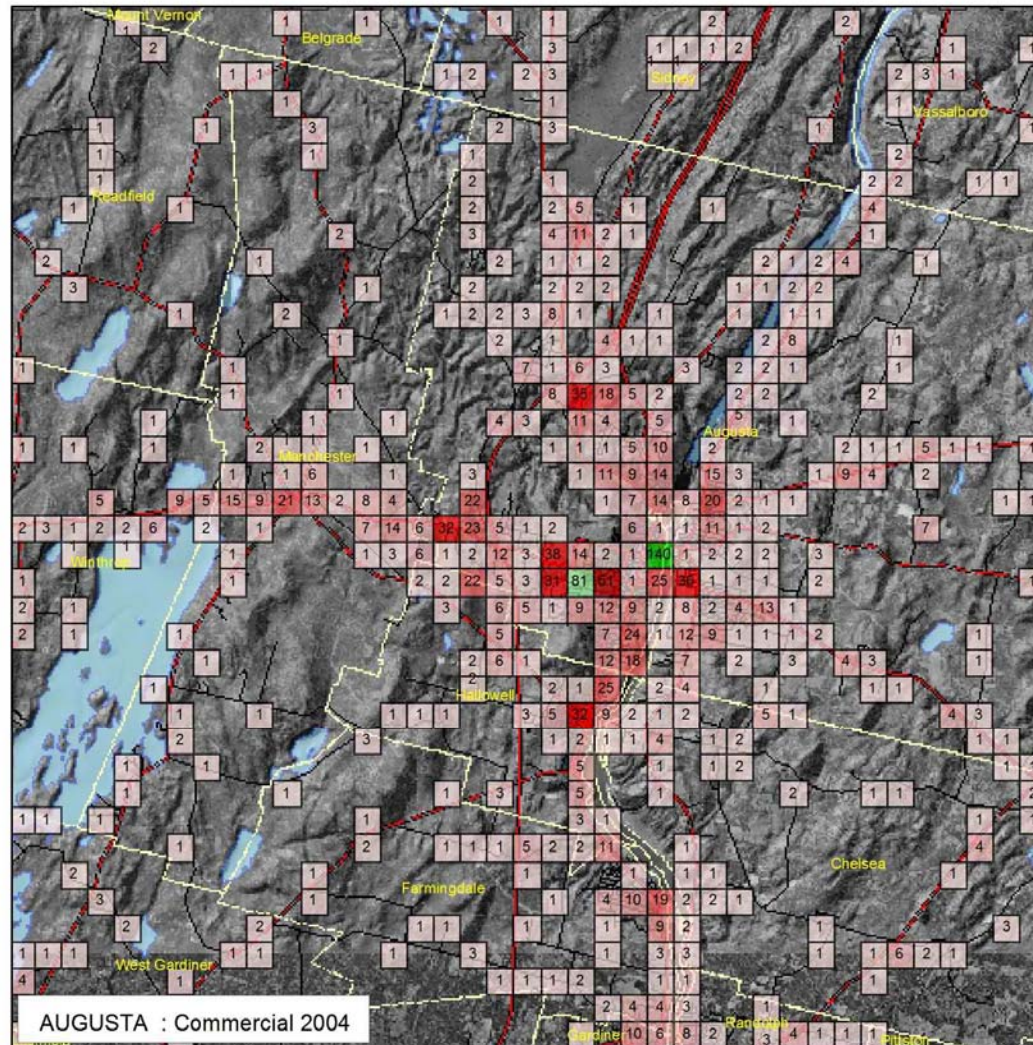


Tracking development by utility connections, Augusta, 1990





Augusta, 1995



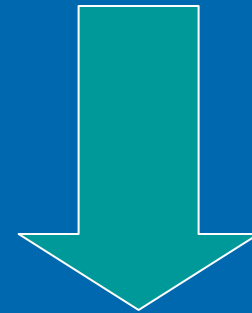
Augusta, 2004



# Shift State Focus

- Coordinate state investments
- Pilot regional projects
- Give affected towns a voice in the review of large capital projects with regional impacts

State



Regional



Local

# Shift State Focus Coordinate State Investments



State investments can strengthen and revitalize  
downtowns and village areas

# Shift State Focus

## Current Regional Efforts

Mt. A to the Sea

First Park

5 Towns north of Portland

AVCOG Municipal Service Center  
and Regional CIP

BACTS

There are many regional initiatives  
from which we can learn

Gateway 1

PACTS

5-Year Tourism Plan for Northern ME

Lewiston-Auburn Joint Commission

Sagadahoc Region Rural  
Resource Initiative

Working Waterfronts in Washington  
County



## Shift State Focus

# Pilot Regional Development Plans

- Transportation
  - Housing
  - Natural resource protection
  - Economic development
- 

# Shift State Focus Voice in Large Capital Projects



Large capital projects have land use impacts beyond any  
one town's borders

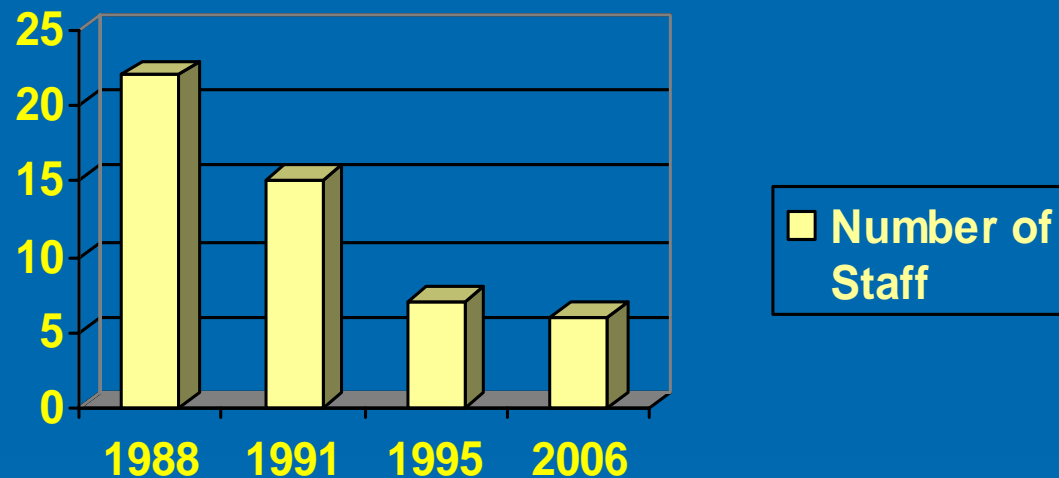
# Assess Costs



Make Use of Existing Resources

# Program Funding

State Comprehensive Planning Staff  
Since Program Inception

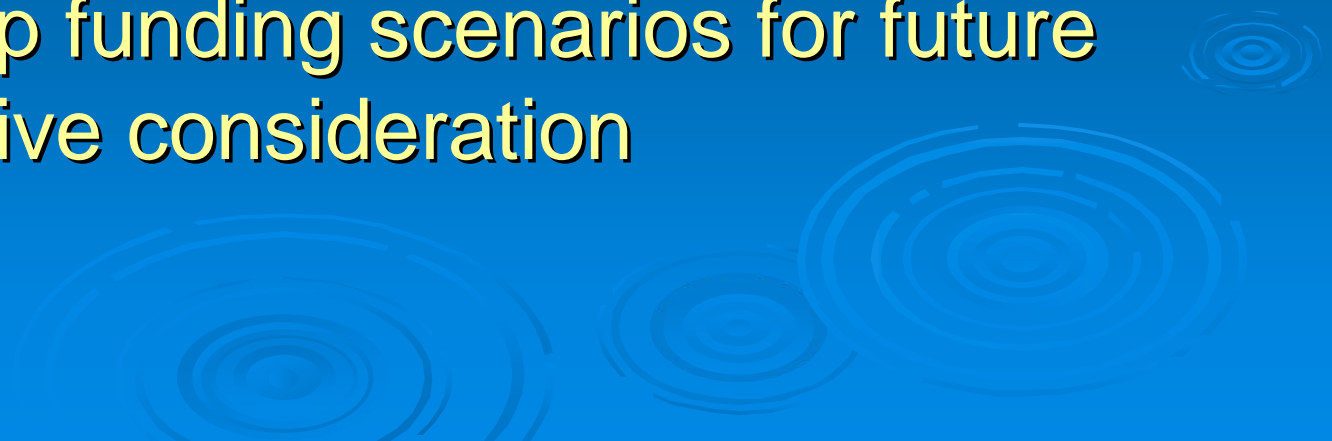


## 2006 General Fund Financial Assistance Programs

- \$194,000 to regional councils
- \$150,000 grants to municipalities
- \$15,000 in regional challenge grants



# Cost of Implementing Our Recommendations

1. Make better use of existing resources to improve process and results
  2. Leverage other efforts/partners
  3. Develop funding scenarios for future legislative consideration
- 

# Summary

## 1. Enhance Local Planning

- Focus SPO review of local plans
- Improve tools for local planning
- Monitor and track changes

## 2. Shift State Focus

- Coordinate state investments
  - Pilot regional development plans
  - Voice in large capital projects
- 

# Conclusion

- Effective land use planning is important to Maine's economy and sense of place
  - There has been much success on which to build; but we have come as far as we can under the laws and policies from the 1980s
  - It's time for a new generation of land use planning in Maine
- 